

Annual Report



United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana 2002

Prepared by the Office of the Clerk

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Message from the Clerk..

The annual report of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana is a summary of the many events which have taken place during the 2002 calendar year. We continue to look for ways to work smarter rather than harder as we grow together as a Federal Family.

The Court's civil case load decreased for the first time in a number of years while our criminal caseload continues to increase at nearly three times the national average.

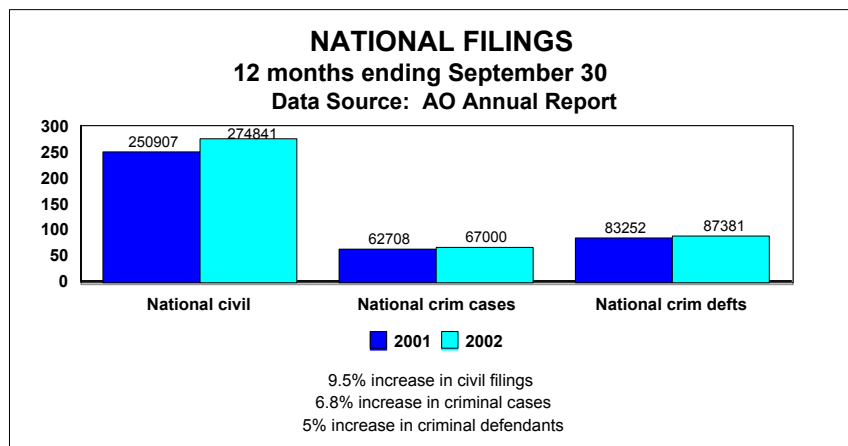
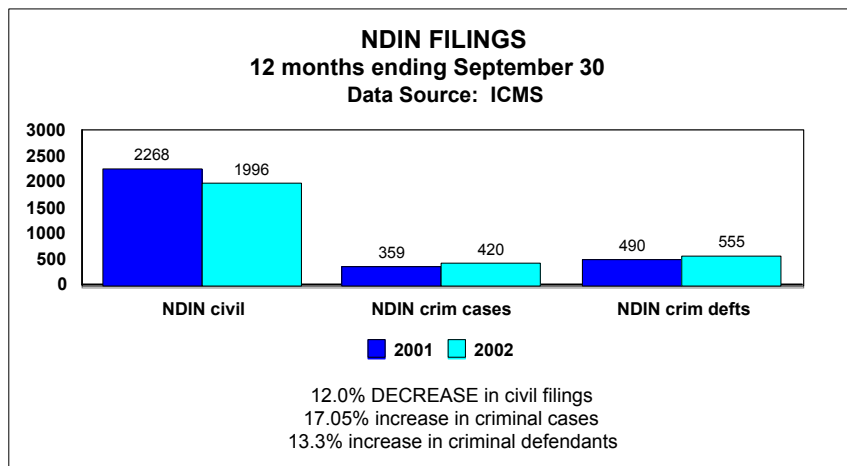
After years of planning and countless hours of hard work, the long-awaited move into the new Hammond Courthouse took place in July, 2002. This beautiful new courthouse made from Indiana limestone is magnificent both inside and out. It sends a message to all that this is a building where the rule of law is taken seriously. The Central Public Hall or atrium conveys both a functional and symbolic impression for all those who enter. Once inside the building, you immediately notice the glittering blown glass sculptures of the world renowned Dale Chihuly. The internal layout of the building is designed to optimize the functional relationships of the various offices. The Court chambers and courtrooms are on the third and fourth floors and overlook the atrium. The main floor houses the District and Bankruptcy Clerks' Offices, the Jury Assembly Room and the Cafeteria. The lower level brings together the U. S. Marshal, Probation and Pretrial Services, the Community Defender as well as the U. S. Attorney.

The challenges of moving into the new Hammond Courthouse have lessened and it is time to look for a new challenge. The court has already begun plans to convert our paper files into electronic court filing. This system will allow the filing and viewing of documents over the Internet to our court from anywhere in the world. We look forward to providing even more efficient customer service with electronic court filing.

The events in our country and around the world have caused everyone to become more aware and security conscious. While we have made many changes, protecting the rule of law and providing our customers with the service they deserve remain the essence of what the judiciary and this Court are about.

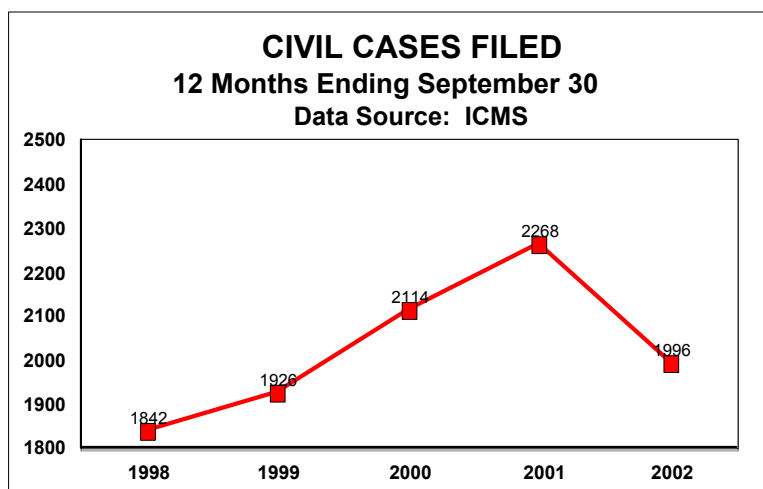
Statistical Information

During fiscal 2002 (October 1, 2001 - September 30, 2002), in district courts nationwide, criminal and civil filings increased. In the Northern District of Indiana, we saw a decrease in filings of civil cases but increases in criminal cases/defendants. Civil filings in our district decreased by 272 cases (12.0%), criminal cases increased by 61 (17.05%) and criminal defendants increased by 65 (13.3%). Nationwide, civil filings increased by 9.5%, criminal cases increased by 6.8% and criminal defendants increased 5.0%.

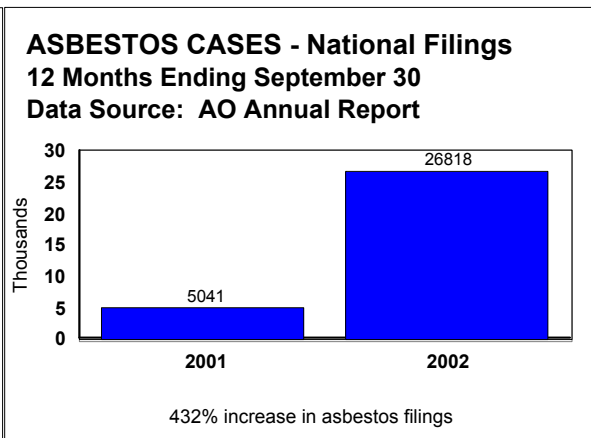
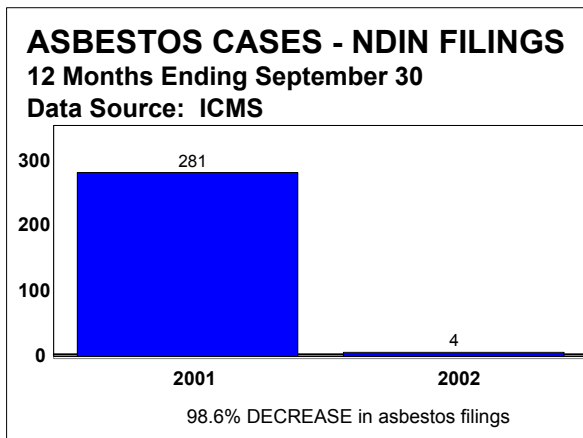


Civil

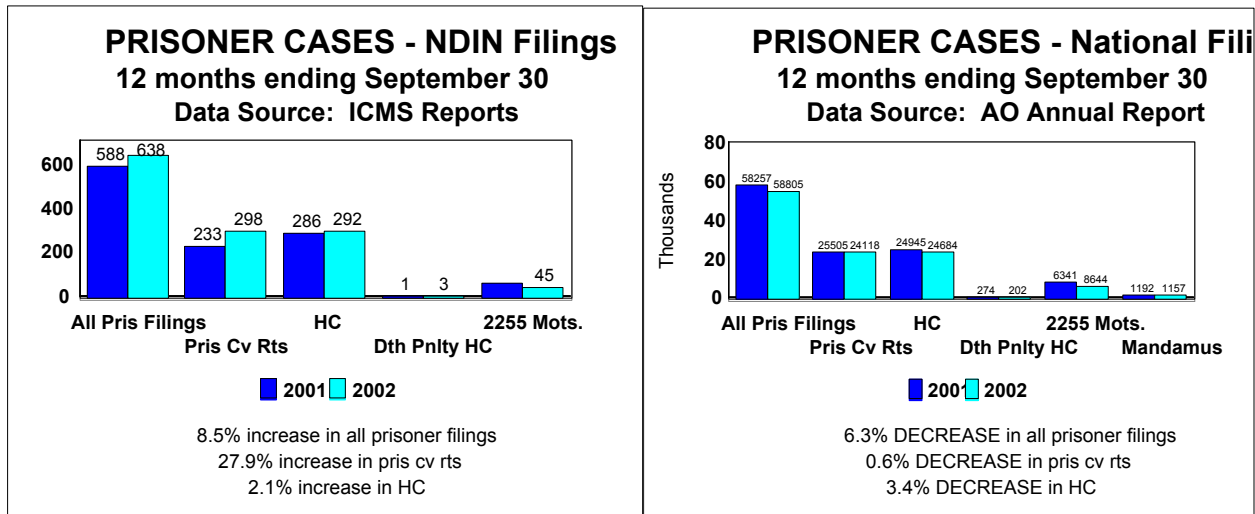
Our civil filings decreased compared to the national average from 2001 to 2002 (a 12% decrease vs. a 9.5% increase).



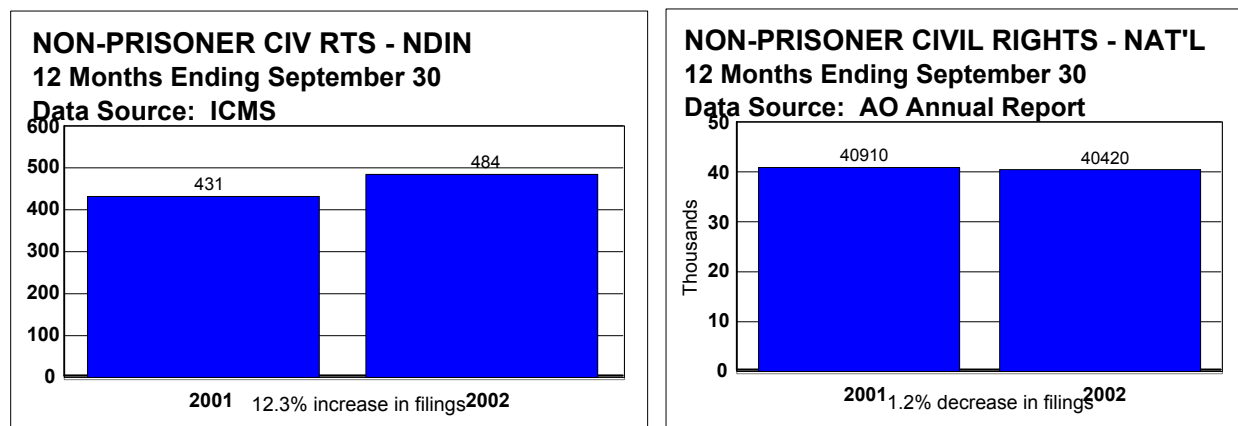
Part of the decrease in civil filings in our district is accounted for in the reduction in asbestos personal injury filings, which have decreased 98.6% from last year (281 in 2001 vs. 4 in 2002). This is an area of civil cases where we have seen significant filings in recent years. Courts nationwide saw a dramatic increase of 432% in asbestos personal injury cases in fiscal year 2002.



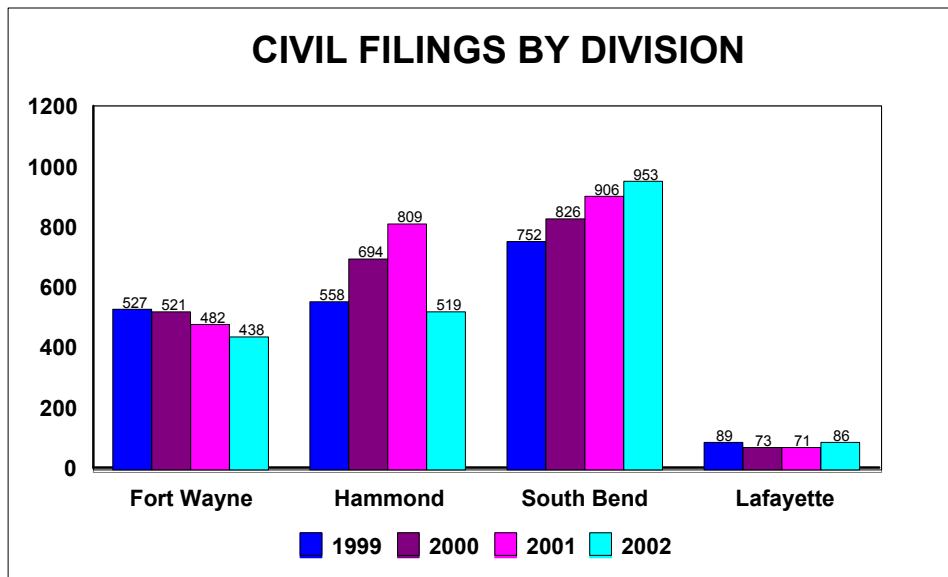
Offsetting this decrease to some extent, we continued to see an increase in prisoner civil rights filings of 27.9% and an increase of 2.1% in habeas corpus filings. In contrast, courts nationwide saw a slight 0.6% decrease in prisoner civil rights cases and a 3.4% decrease in habeas corpus filings.



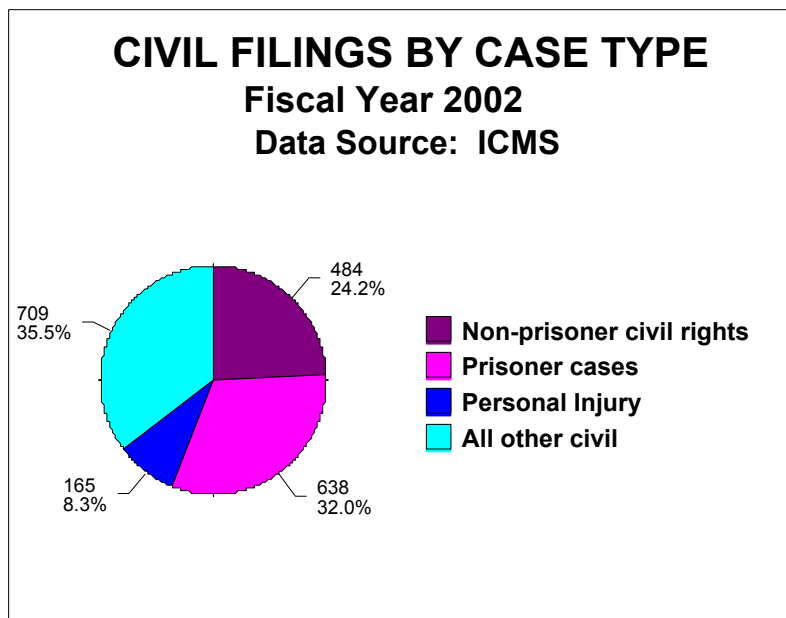
An area where our district continues to see a significant volume of filings is non-prisoner civil rights cases (discrimination in employment cases), where filings increased by 53 cases in fiscal 2002 (12.3%). Nationwide filings of these cases decrease slightly by 1.2%:



The number of civil filings for each division for the past four years is shown on the following chart. Two of the four divisions experienced increases in fiscal 2002 from fiscal 2001 (South Bend 4.9% and Lafayette 21.1%) and two divisions experienced a decrease (Fort Wayne -9.1% and Hammond -35.8%). The dramatic reduction in Hammond is primarily due to the decrease in asbestos personal injury cases.

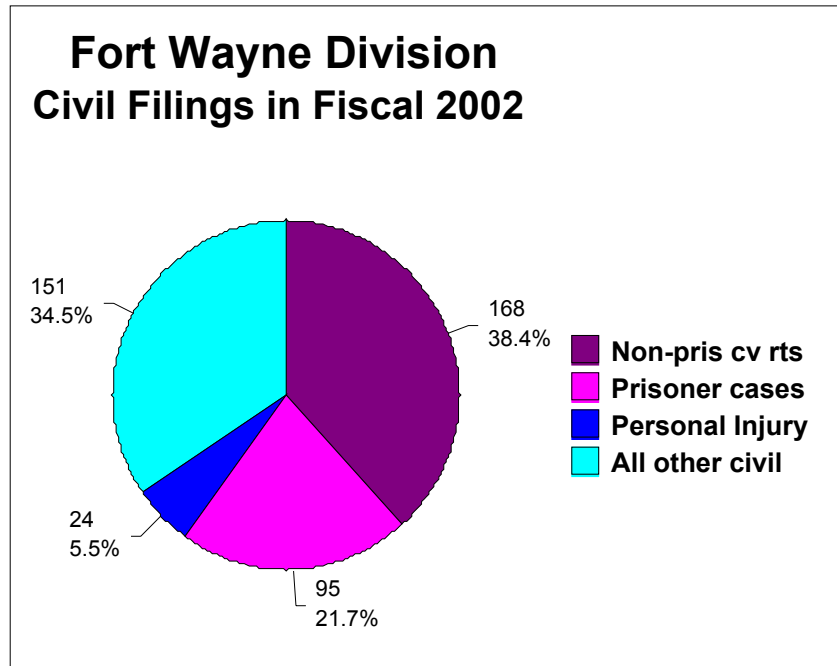


In assessing civil filings by case type for the entire district, prisoner cases represented the largest percentage for a single type of filing (32.0 %), followed by non-prisoner civil rights (24.2%) and personal injury cases (8.3%).

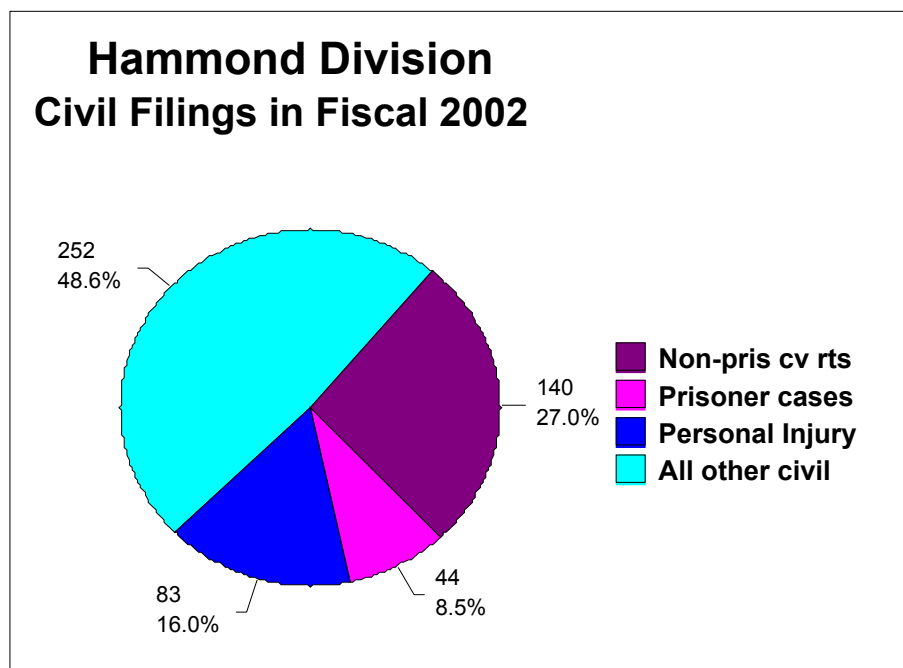


Looking at these same types of cases by division, the mix of civil cases varies with each division.

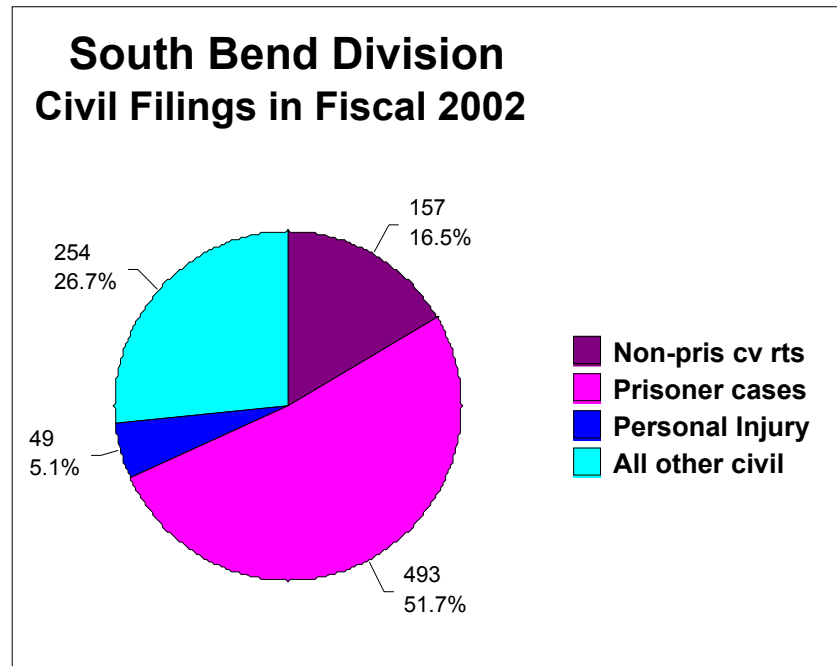
The two categories of civil cases most frequently filed in Fort Wayne are non-prisoner civil rights (38.4%) and other civil (34.5%), comprising 72.9% of total filings in Fort Wayne.



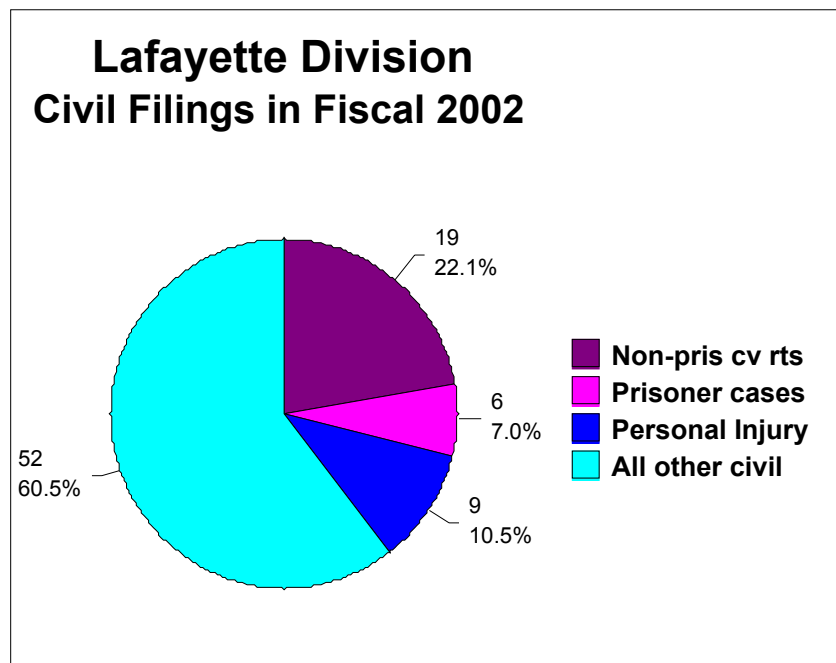
In Hammond, the two categories most frequently filed were other civil (48.6%) and non-prisoner civil rights (27.0%), comprising 75.6% of total filings in Hammond.



In the South Bend division, prisoner cases continue to comprise the largest category of civil filings (51.7%), with other civil as the second most common case type (26.7%). Together, prisoner cases and other civil comprise 78.4% of South Bend's filings.

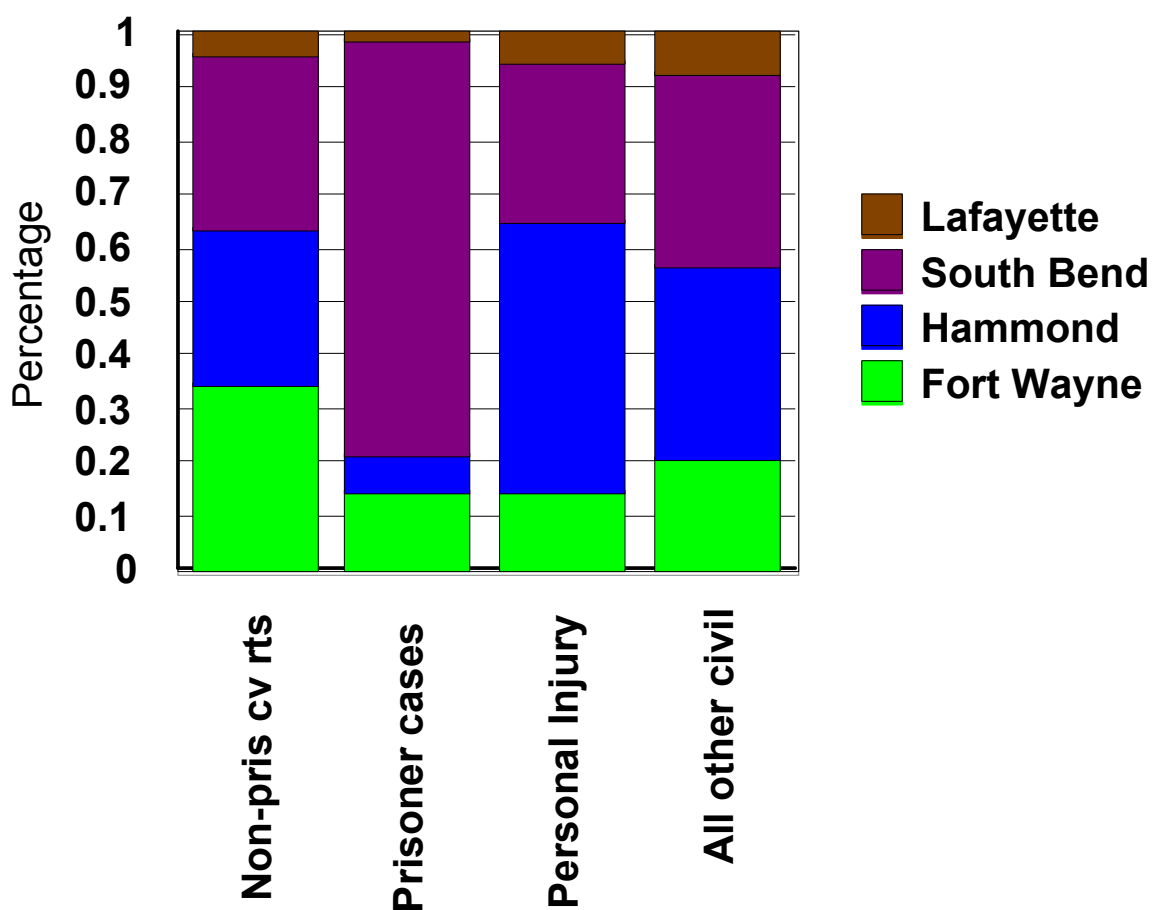


In the Lafayette division, the two most common types of civil filings are other civil (60.5%) and non-prisoner civil rights (22.1%), comprising 82.6% of total filings.



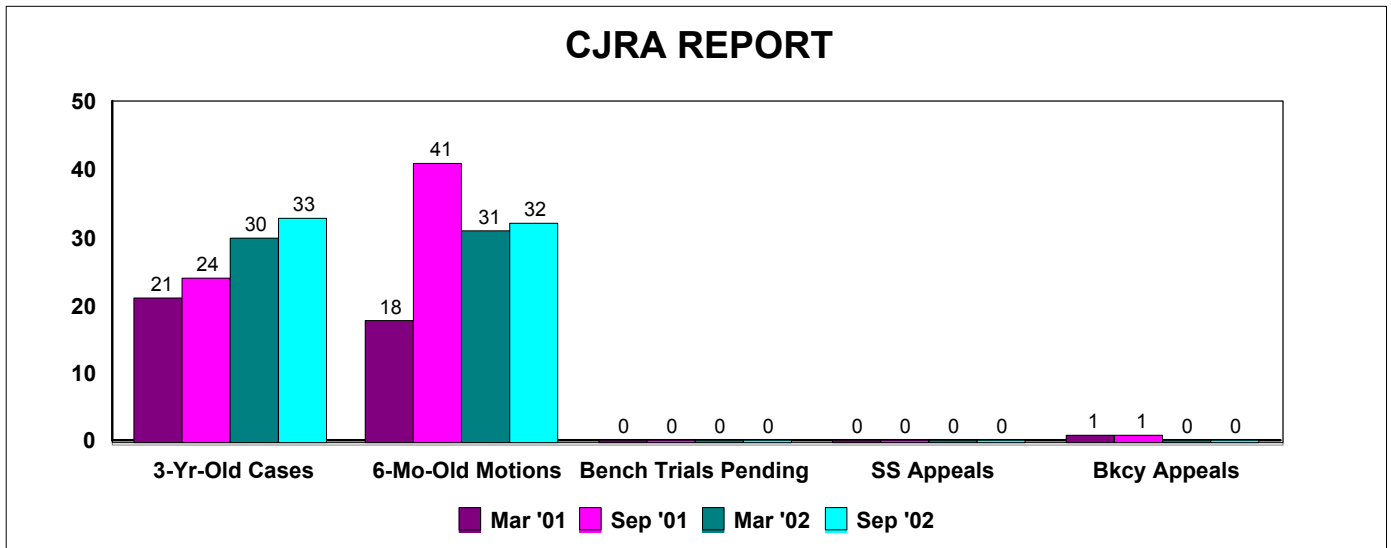
District-wide, the Fort Wayne office had the highest number of non-prisoner civil rights cases (168; 34.71%), the South Bend office had the highest number of prisoner cases (493; 77.27%) and the Hammond office had the highest number of personal injury cases (83; 50.30%) The number of other civil cases filed was divided among the four divisions as follows: Fort Wayne =151 or 21.30%, Hammond=252 or 35.54%, South Bend=254 or 35.83% and Lafayette=52 or 7.33%.

TYPES OF CASES FILED IN EACH DIVISION



Civil Justice Reform Act

The Civil Justice Reform Act requires status reports from all judicial officers twice each year regarding pending 3-year-old civil cases, 6-month-old motions, bench trials under advisement, bankruptcy appeals and social security appeals. This automated report is mandated by the Judicial Conference.



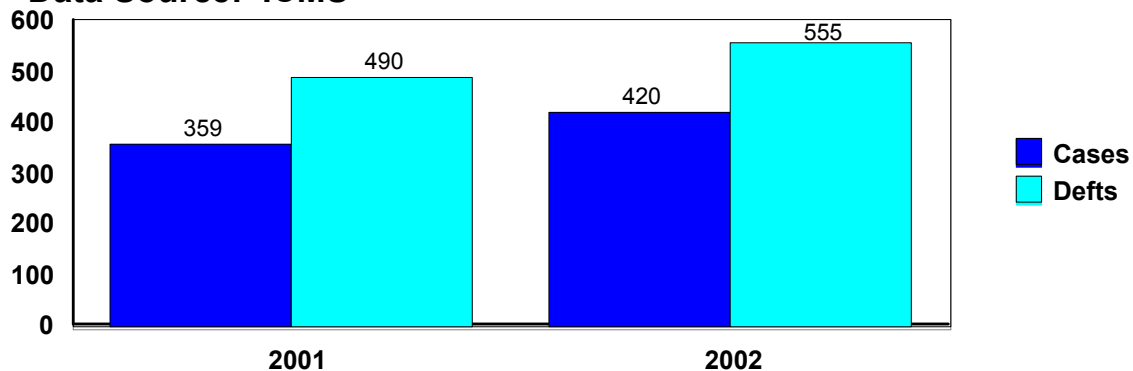
Criminal

Criminal case filings increased 17.05% and defendants increased 13.3% in the Northern District of Indiana from 2000 to 2001. This compares with slightly smaller increases of 6.4% and 4.7% in these areas nationwide.

CRIMINAL FILINGS - NDIN

Twelve Months Ending September 30

Data Source: ICMS

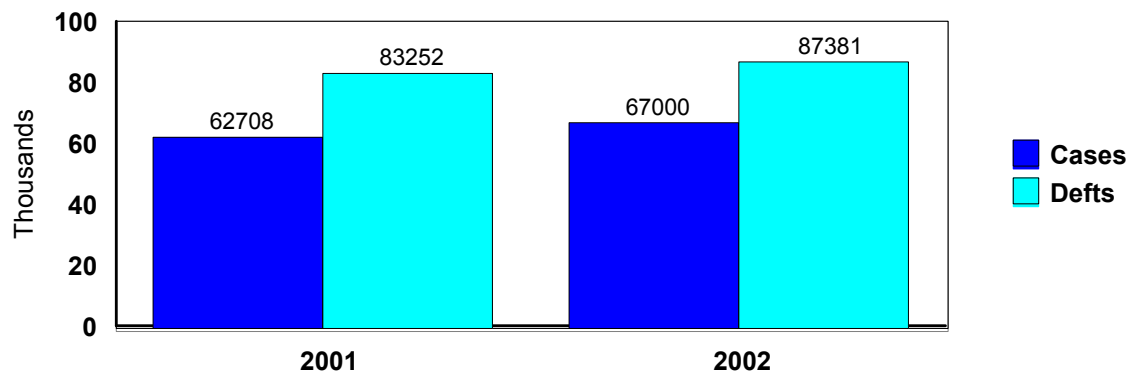


17.0% increase in cases filed
13.3% increase in defendants filed

CRIMINAL FILINGS - NATIONAL

Twelve Months Ending September 30

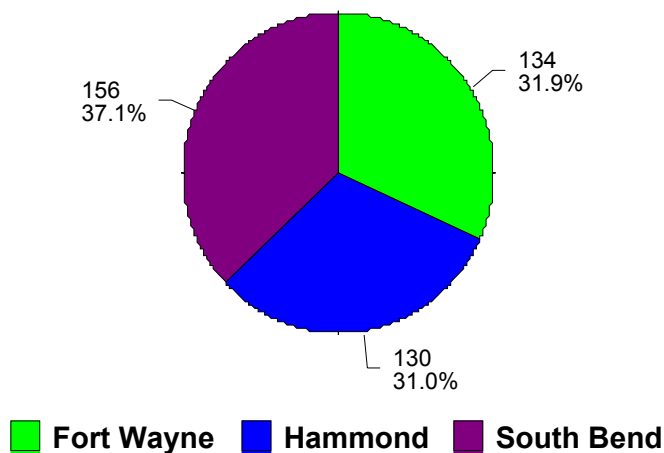
Data Source: AO Annual Report



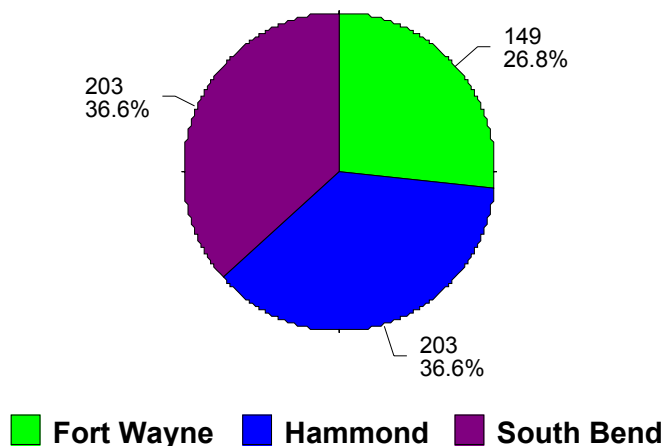
6.4% increase in cases filed
4.7% increase in defendants filed

Distribution of criminal filings among Fort Wayne, Hammond and South Bend divisions has been adjusted as a result of the new criminal equalization procedures instituted in October, 2001. Contrary to what we have seen in past years, where the greatest number of criminal filings occurred in the Hammond division, the three largest offices now receive nearly equal assignment of criminal cases. The Hammond division received 31.0% of cases (compared to 60% in 2001) and 26.8% of defendants (compared to 65.1% in 2001), both down significantly from fiscal 2001. In Fort Wayne, criminal filings comprised 31.90% of all criminal cases and 26.85% of defendants, both up from fiscal 2001 (20% of cases & 17.1% of defendants in 2001). In South Bend, criminal cases accounted for 37.14% of all criminal cases (compared to 20% in 2001) and 36.6% of defendants (compared to 17.8% in 2001), both up from 2001.

CRIMINAL CASES FILED
12 Months Ending September 30, 2002
Data Source: ICMS

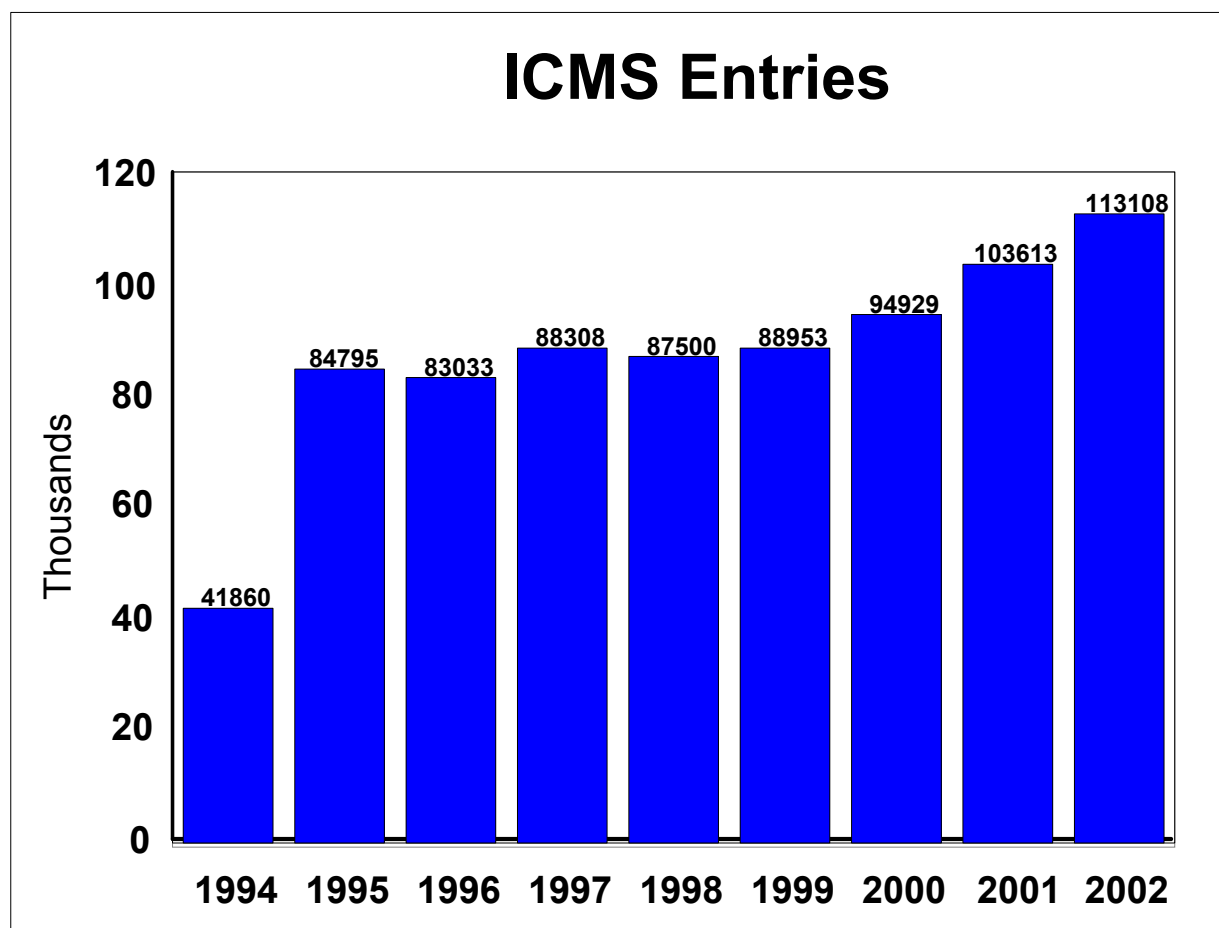


CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS FILED
12 Months Ending September 30, 2002
Data Source: ICMS



Integrated Case Management System

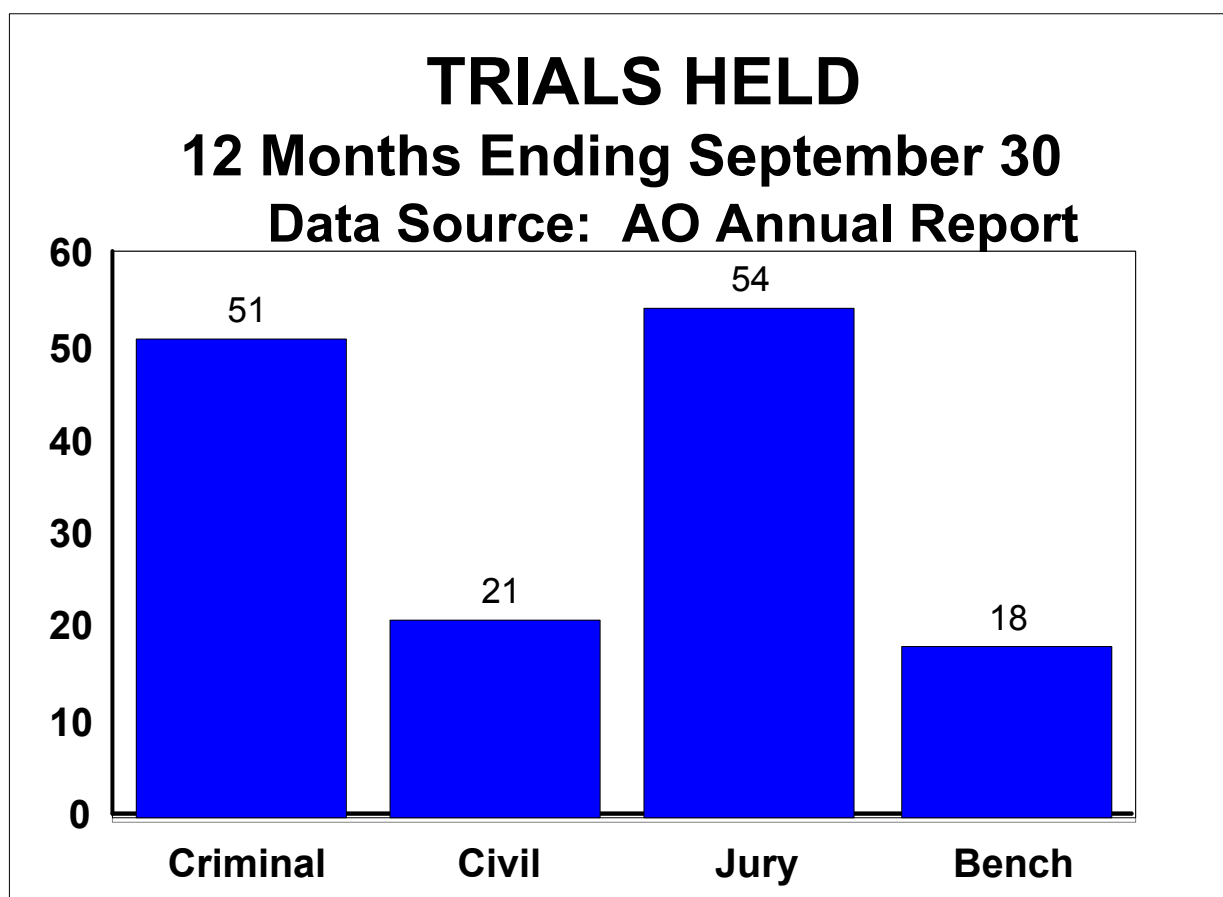
The court's automated docketing system, ICMS, was implemented in 1992 for civil cases and in 1994 for criminal cases. Since that time 883,083 docket entries have been made in the system. At the end of calendar 2003, the court is scheduled to migrate to a new automated docketing system, CM/ECF, which will include electronic filing of documents over the Internet.



Trials

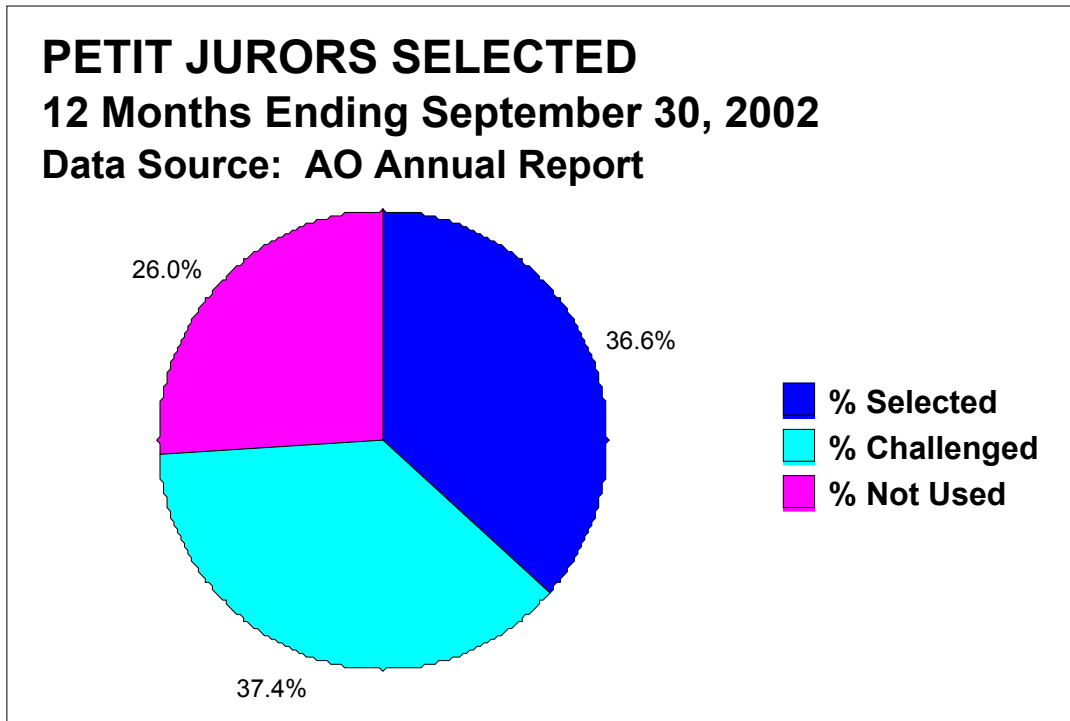
The number of total trials (jury and bench) during fiscal 2002 was 72, down 47.2% from fiscal 2001 (106 trials). The percentage of civil vs. criminal trials changed from fiscal 2001 to fiscal 2002, with the percent of civil trials decreasing (from 37% to 30%) and criminal trials increasing (63% to 70%). Nationwide, criminal trials comprised 63.2% of total trials and civil accounted for 36.8% of all trials.

The percentage of jury vs. bench trials in our district also changed from fiscal 2001 to fiscal 2002. The percentage of jury trials increased from 58.5% in 2001 to 75% in 2002. The percentage of bench/other trials in our district decreased from 41.5% in 2001 to 25% in 2002.



Jurors

During fiscal 2002, a total of 1,938 prospective petit jurors appeared for selection in our district and 62 juries were selected, an increase in activity from fiscal 2001 (1,771 jurors and 56 juries selected). Of the jurors who appeared for selection, 36.6% were selected to serve on a jury, 37.4% were challenged and 26% were not used. Several years ago the Judicial Conference set a goal of 30% or lower for unused jurors and our court has once again met that goal.



During fiscal 2002 there were 7 grand juries serving our district. These grand juries held 78 sessions and spent a total of 446 hours in session, a slight increase in activity from what we saw in fiscal 2001 (5 grand juries, 72 sessions and 440 hours). The average number of grand jurors per session was 20.7 and the average length of a session was 5.7 hours, about the same as fiscal 2001 (20.1 jurors and 6.1 hours per session).

GRAND JUROR ACTIVITY					
	# Grand Juries	# Sessions Convened	Total Hours in Session	Average #Jurors per Session	Average #Hours per Session
FY2001	5	72	440	20.1	6.1
FY2002	7	78	446	20.7	5.7
% Change	28.6%	7.7%	1.3%	2.9%	-7%

Personnel

There were numerous changes in personnel this year, throughout the district.

- Erin Cole began her employment as a law clerk to Hon. Theresa Springmann January 28th.
- Thomas Ratcliffe began his term as a law clerk to Hon. Rudy Lozano February 4th.
- Bob Hennesey, Jr. joined the Clerk's Office as Courtroom Technology Administrator February 11th.
- Mariah Moran began her term as a law clerk to Hon. James Moody April 8th.
- Patricia (Trish) Berles resigned from her position as a docket clerk in the Fort Wayne Division April 26th.
- Lisa Steinke joined the Clerk's Office as a docket clerk in the Fort Wayne Division May 20th.
- Joyce Walden resigned from her position as a docket clerk in the Hammond Division June 7th.



- Kate Hollenbeck ended her term as a law clerk to Hon. William Lee August 9th.
- Scott Smith, law clerk to Hon. Robert Miller, ended his term August 9th.
- Marty Foos, law clerk to Hon. Christopher Nuechterlein, ended his term August 9th.
- Todd Weaver began his term as a law clerk to Hon. William Lee August 12th.
- Justin Sandberg began his term as a law clerk to Hon. Robert Miller August 12th.
- Peter Lantka began his term as a law clerk to Hon. Christopher Nuechterlein August 12th.
- Debbie Campbell Druley ended her term as law clerk to Hon. Rudy Lozano August 30th.
- Jennifer Ortiz began her term as a law clerk to Hon. Rudy Lozano September 2nd.
- Laura Low, Court Reporter for Hon. Robert Miller, went from full time to part time effective September 20th.
- Debra Bonk, Court Reporter for Hon. Robert Miller, began with the court in a part-time capacity September 23rd.
- Christopher Evens ended his term as a law clerk to Hon. Allen Sharp September 30th.
- Jennifer Drewry began her term as a law clerk with Hon. Allen Sharp October 1st.
- David Katz ended his term as Architect with the Clerk's Office October 1st.
- Julia Kozicki resigned from her position as death penalty law clerk to Hon. Allen Sharp November 1st.



Finance Budget & Procurement

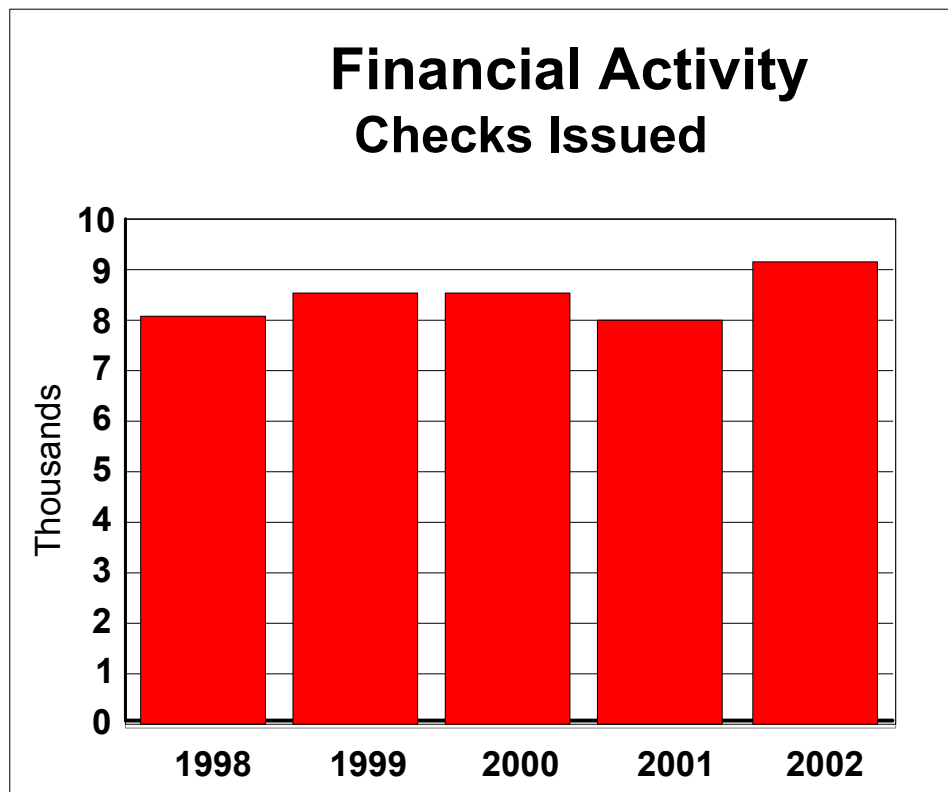
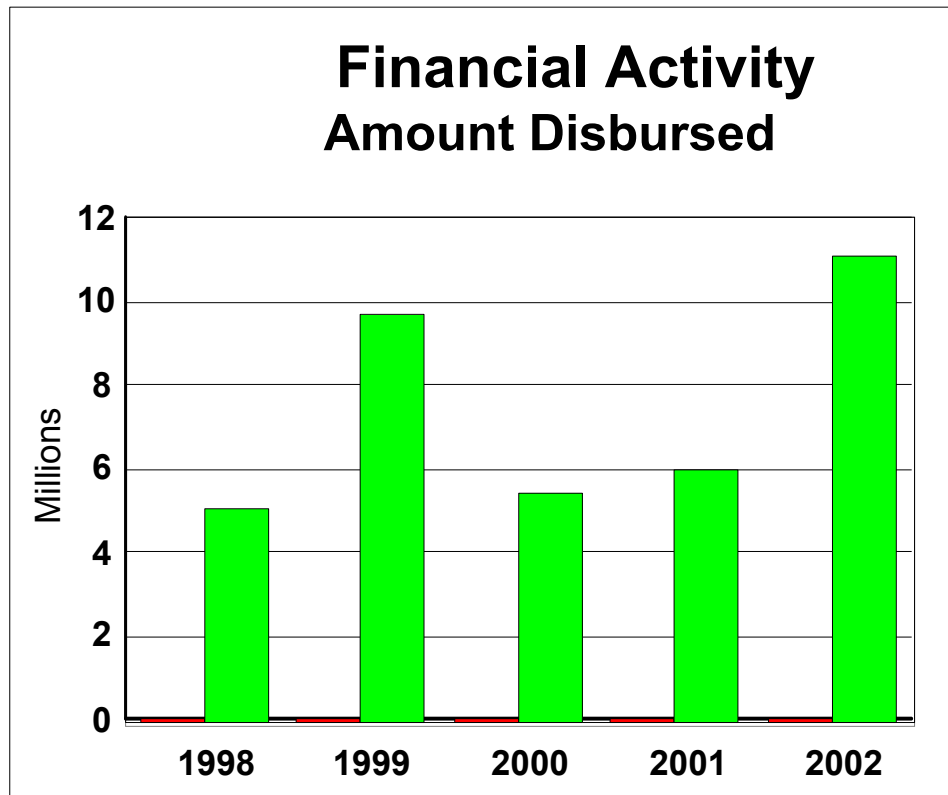
The Budget and Procurement Section was very busy during Fiscal Year 2002. Some of the major projects included:

- Judge Cosbey moved into his newly remodeled chambers in Fort Wayne - new furniture was installed.
- In the wake of 9-11 and the anthrax scares all divisions were outfitted with special mail handling rooms, equipped with safety equipment, supplies and clothing to protect the staff.
- The Financial/Administrative office in South Bend received new furniture.
- The move to the new Hammond Courthouse required the purchase of additional furniture and supplies.



Example of the new furniture for one of the Judge's Secretaries for the Hammond Courthouse.

The Charts below show the Financial Activity for our District in 2002.





Automation & Technology

Courtroom Technology

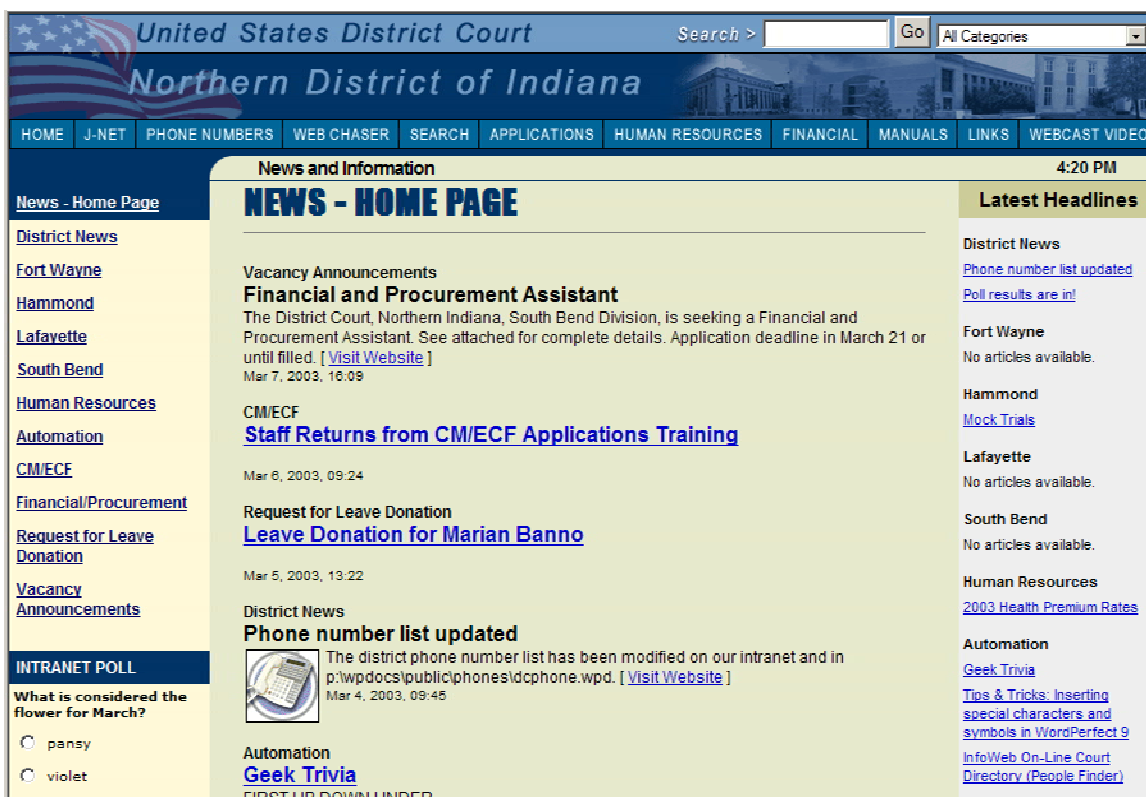
- Designed, Procured and Installed approximately \$150,000 worth of technology upgrades for the District
 - Provided cabling, installation and programming changes to Upgrade 9 Courtrooms with new Digital document cameras. These cameras provide counsel with High resolution, Full Page Displays of Document/Object Evidence.
 - Provided cabling, installation and programming changes for Plasma screen installations in Judge Miller's and Judge Sharp's Courtroom. This provides Gallery Video Evidence Viewing along with Dual purpose Video Conferencing functions. Also the Witness Plasma screens allow for Witness identification of video evidence along with future marking functions.
 - In the process of cabling, there were installation and programming changes for Permanent installation of Video Conferencing in Judges Miller, Sharp and Lee's courtrooms. This will provide the Courtroom with quicker, more reliable Video Conferencing capabilities and the Control scheme is integrated into existing courtroom A/V control system. It also provides a much more aesthetically pleasing courtroom.
 - Procured most material, test equipment and tools needed to properly perform duties of new Courtroom Technology Position.
- Designed Closed Circuit Video Conferencing System to provide Bi-Directional Conferencing from each courtroom to Marshal's holding cell for unruly defendants. Yet to be funded, this design will also allow Digital Recording/Video Streaming of Courtroom Proceedings over the network.
- Rewired, Labeled and Provided AutoCAD Drawings of Judge Sharp's Courtroom A/V system. This allows easier troubleshooting and system addition by other systems personnel.
- Troubleshoot and repaired equipment problems in all 9 courtroom A/V systems in the district.
- Designed and procured Judge Nuechterlein's Courtroom A/V system. This is awaiting installation.

Automation

- Upgraded the backup software, Backup Exec, on all Novell Servers to Backup Exec 9.0. This latest version of Backup Exec allows us to be able to see, setup, and backup servers across the Wide Area Network. We were unable to accomplish this using older versions of Backup Exec or Arcserve.
- Upgraded Novell Servers in Hammond, Fort Wayne and South Bend to NetWare 5.1. As of this year, Novell no longer supports NetWare 5.0. The servers in Lafayette will be upgraded in November of this year.
- We upgraded from Lotus CC Mail to Lotus Notes, used throughout the Courts.
- Replaced Novell Backup servers in Hammond, Fort Wayne and South Bend.
- Replaced the Primary and Backup servers in Lafayette.
- Replaced the primary Novell server in Hammond.
- Installed a Telereach remote console in Lafayette and Fort Wayne allowing Systems personal to access the equipment in these server rooms without having to be there.
- Version 2 of the Court CD was released the 2nd week of October. The enhancements include 360 degree views of all electronic courtrooms and updated information on the courtroom technology, new phone numbers and area codes, and a new link to local rules document on our Internet web site.
- There has been cyclical replacement of PC's throughout the District.
- The Intranet home page has a new look and design! In an effort to bring employees current information in a more direct manner, current news is now on the content of our Intranet home page. Members of the management team have the ability to publish new information as it becomes available.
- The Internet web site is in the process of being redesigned with easy to navigate screens and menus, placing important and frequently retrieved information on the main pages. It will be implemented in the Spring of 2003.



Here is a picture of a presentation cart in Hammond.



The current Intranet website in our District.



The soon to be Internet Web site to be implemented in the Spring of 2003.

Training

Training continues to be a key component in our Court's development and future. Effective training programs have provided our clerk's office and chambers personnel with the necessary skills and competencies in the areas of operation, technology and professional development. Our district wide training committee comprised of District, Probation and Bankruptcy personnel continues to work together as a team by pooling our resources and training talents in order to provide training programs to benefit all our staff. Some of the training programs offered to staff in 2002 are as follows:

- Performance Management System
- Lotus Notes Basics
- Lotus Notes Advanced
- Frontline Leadership
- Power Point
- Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees
- Sealed Motions
- Automated Judges Trial Reports (JS-10)
- Statistical Reporting of Sealed Criminal Cases
- Sexual Harassment Awareness
- Health Fair
- Retirement Program
- EAP - Handling Change
- 7th Circuit Leadership Program
- Procedural Manual Meetings
- ICMS Training



Kathy Wright receives a certificate for completing ICMS training from Clerk Ludwig and Trainer Karen Brickner.

Streaming video continues to be an effective means to provide training to staff from their desktop computer. We use two types of video streaming in our district. Staff can view “on demand” video which allows viewers to select previously recorded FJTN broadcasts from the intranet site. This option allows staff to watch previously recorded programs at their convenience. The second type is “live” streaming. By selecting the “live broadcast” link from our intranet site, staff can view live FJTN programs without leaving their workstations. Program topics include financial, information, technology, automation, judicial and legal education to name a few. Some of the programs staff have viewed via video streaming include the following:

Managing Leave in a Family-Friendly Workplace
Rain of Terror
Leading in Times of Crisis
Court Forum: Making Ethical Choices
Court Forum: Managing Performance Problems
Court to Court
Long Term Care: Do You Need It?
HR Flexibilities: Using them Effectively
Financial Planning Series
Improving the CJA Voucher Payment Process: A District Clerk’s Office Perspective
Managerial Decision Making: Lessons from the Cuban Missile Crisis
Understanding the Judiciary’s Budget Process
Confronting Crises: The Employee’s Perspective
Planning: How Do Your Benefits Meet Your Future Needs?
The Rookie Manager
Adaptive Manager
Time Management for Court Staff
Motivating Staff for Optimal Performance
The Judiciary’s Response to the Anthrax Threat
What’s New in the Thrift Savings Plan?
CM/ECF: Decisions for District Courts
Criminal Statistics
Developing Courtroom Technology Training Programs
Moving Information–Understanding PDF Files and Image Integrity for the U. S. Courts
Orientation Seminar for Federal Law Clerks
Judicial Assistants’/Judicial Secretaries’ Resource Program: A Guide for Working in Chambers
Sentencing and Guidelines

Four members of our clerk's office staff, Karen Brickner, Kurt Koch, Linda Walker and Todd Steiner have successfully completed the Federal Court Leadership Program. This two and a half year program offered by the Federal Judicial Center combines instruction, face-to-face workshops, and self-directed projects at the Court level to teach and develop leadership skills. Linda Walker was featured on the FJTN program Court to Court, to discuss her project with training the bar and the public on CM/ECF.

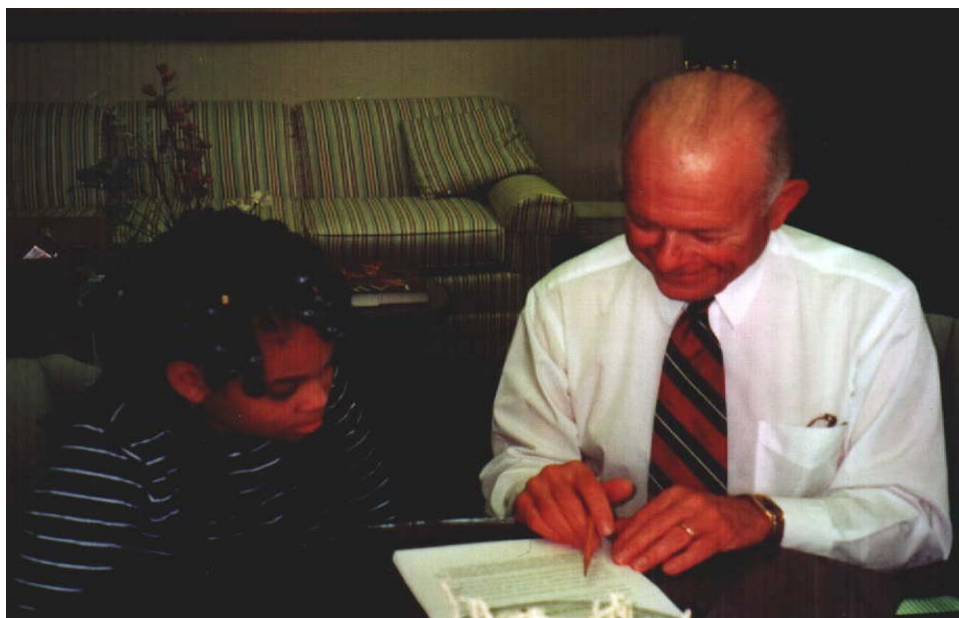


Graduation ceremonies were held on the steps of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

Happenings in the District

January

Employees of the Fort Wayne federal courthouse for the fourth year participated in Fort Wayne Community School Study Connection Program. From the beginning of the School year until May on every Tuesday one student is paired up with a volunteer tutor from the Courthouse.



Judge William C. Lee tutoring a student.



Tutor Tony Genakos looks on as student is doing her work.

May

The Employee Recognition Program was held at Das Dutchman Essenhaus in Middlebury, Indiana on Monday, May 6 at 11:00 a.m. 40 people attended. Two new employees were introduced: Kathy Wright, Deputy Clerk for Fort Wayne Clerks Office and Bob Hennesey Jr., Courtroom Technology Administrator for the District.



Pat-on-the-Back Administrative Leave awards were presented to Lana Melton, Jimmie Padly and Joyce Walden (not present).



Service awards were given to Peggy Guernsey (30 years), Juli Nowacki (20 years) (not present), Kermit Hilles (10 years), and Laura Low (5 years) (not present).

Honorary awards (4 hours of administrative leave) were given as follows:



Helping Hand Award & Organized Clutter Award to Ed Ciba.
Accepting in his behalf is Jim Dukai.



Best Team Player Award and Customer Service Award to Kevin Krikau



Courtesy Award and Professionalism Award to Melanie Sus



Enthusiasm Award to Stephanie Fikes



Conscientious Award to Todd Steiner



Hero of the Heart Award to Peggy Guernsey



Eager Beaver Award to Lana Melton



Court Jester Award to Kurt Koch

The following employees were given awards for service above and beyond their regular duties:



Distinguished Service Award to Tony Lee for his exceptional work with the local bar

Special Act or Service Award to Laura Low (not present) based on her performance during the preliminary injunction hearing on the AM General and General Motors v. Daimler Chrysler case



Outstanding Performance Award to Sharon Macon for exceptional dedication to duty



Special Act or Service Award to Ruth Nagy for her assistance in Hammond on many occasions throughout the year



Valuable Ideas/Innovations Award to Todd Steiner for creation of the court CD which is given to all new attorneys



Brian, Darrell and Barb are working on the 20 question quiz about our divisional offices.



Socializing among clerks office employees.

July

On 4th of July Judge Rodovich held a Naturalization ceremony in Harrison Park. He has held these Naturalization ceremonies on the 4th of July for the past 14 years.



Judge Rodovich performing a Naturalization ceremony at Harrison Park in Hammond, as his courtroom deputy Joan Holderman looks on.

August

Judge Sharp presided over a Naturalization ceremony in Lafayette at the Morton Community Center. This is the kickoff of the annual Global Fest.

September

On September 11th on the one year anniversary of “9-11” Hammond held two Special Naturalization Ceremonies in the Atrium.



The audience waits for the Naturalization program to begin.



Patrick Shanley is playing the Bagpipes at the ceremony.



Judge Lozano presided over the morning Naturalization ceremony



Magistrate Judges Theresa Springmann and Andrew Rodovich presided over the afternoon Naturalization ceremony.



Leann Mroz, daughter of Court Report Sharon Mroz, leads the audience with the Pledge of Allegiance

October

South Bend conducted the Queen contest as a fund-raiser for the Homeless shelter in South Bend. To vote for a candidate you had to pay \$1.00. Finalists were Sharon Macon, Sally Fox, and Stephanie Fikes. The contest raised approximately \$600.00 for the Homeless Shelter.

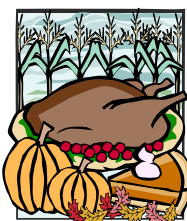


Queen Sharon Macon and her court Sally Fox and Stephanie Fikes

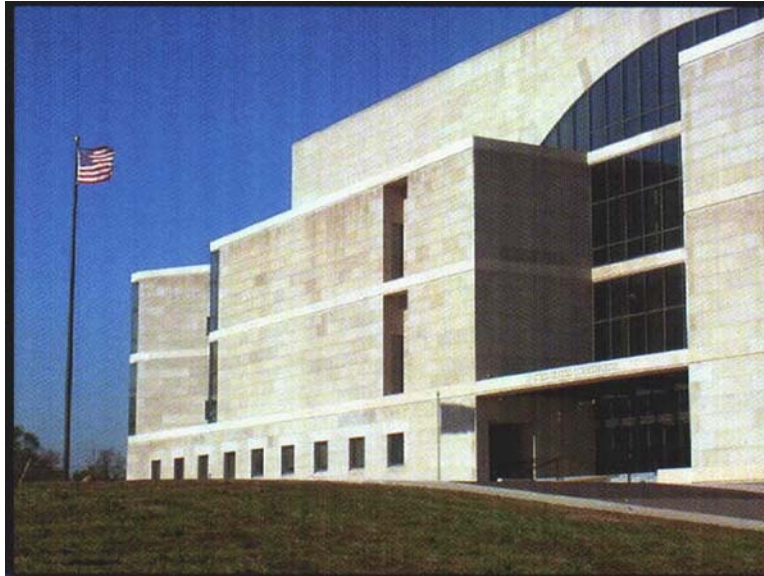
November

South Bend had a drive for old cell phones for the Women's Shelter for Domestic Violence. They donated approximately 30 cell phones.

Lafayette had their annual Charles A. Halleck Federal Building Thanksgiving pot luck luncheon. Employees donated canned goods to the Food Finders for Thanksgiving Food Baskets.



The public dedication ceremony sponsored by GSA and the U. S. Courts for the new Hammond Courthouse was held on November 18th. Remarks were made from James Handley-Regional Administrator for GSA Great Lakes Region, Mayor Duane W. Dedelow Jr, F. Joseph Moravec-GSA Commissioner Public Buildings Service, Judge Robert Miller Jr., David Rozmanich Regional Director for the Office of U. S. Senator Evan Bayh, Tim Sanders-Regional Director for the Office of U. S. Senator Richard Lugar, Thomas P. Leahy-President of the Downtown Hammond Council, John Cain-Executive Director of the Northern Indiana Arts Association, and Henry N. Cobb of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners. A reception for the attendees was sponsored by GSA immediately following the ceremony.



A view of the new Hammond Courthouse



View of Atrium



Woodmar Singers of Gavitt High School

December

On December 16th we held a District wide Christmas luncheon in the new Hammond Courthouse in the Atrium. Over 250 employees from District, Bankruptcy, Probation, U. S. Attorney and the Marshal Service attended. The Luncheon was sponsored by the District and Bankruptcy Judges, Clerks of the District & Bankruptcy Court, Probation Chief, U. S. Attorney and the U. S. Marshal.



People socializing before lunch.



Members of the District Court staff are enjoying the luncheon.



More socializing by staff



Chief Judge Lee saying a few words before lunch.



Judge Lozano and his wife and daughter-in-law with his new Grandson pose for a picture in his courtroom. His Grandson was born on the November 18th dedication ceremony.

In the afternoon a dedication ceremony for the legal community and for the new federal courthouse and a special court session was held honoring Circuit Judge Michael S. Kanne, Judge James T. Moody and Magistrate Judge Andrew P. Rodovich for their respective twenty years of service on the Federal Bench.



Judge and Mrs. Kanne



Judge Michael S. Kanne



Judge and Mrs. Moody



Judge James T. Moody



Judge and Mrs. Rodovich



Judge Andrew P. Rodovich



Judge Sharp presided over the ceremony along with Judges Lee, Lozano and Miller in the special proceedings courtroom.



Ian Bader, architect for the Hammond building gave a few remarks.

Hammond held its first evening Christmas party in the Atrium of the new building on December 6th.



The tables are set and waiting for the guests to arrive.



Here Ed Ciba and Sylvia Planer are taking tickets at the door.



Judge Moody says a few words and wishing everyone Merry Christmas.



Judge Rodovich enjoying his dessert.



Diane Markley, Julie Churchill and Marti Baker are socializing while having dinner.



Nancy Funk and her husband are enjoying the festivities.



Noel Collins and Sharon Mroz with their husbands enjoy some conversation with others.

On the 23rd Hammond held its 8th annual Federal Courthouse Children's Christmas Party.



Santa is arriving to see the children.



Some of Santa's Helpers. Not his usual Elves.



Santa gives a present to Leann Mroz.



Santa with youngest visitor, Andrew Lozano.



Irma Rivera and her grandson Ethan, to see Santa.

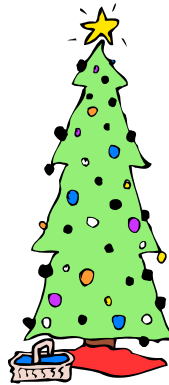


Mariah Moran and her nephew after he opened his present from Santa.

South Bend had their annual ornament exchange and breakfast. Every year this breakfast and ornament exchange seems to grow with more participation and good food.



Lafayette had a Christmas Luncheon and donated money to the Lafayette Fire Department to purchase toys for needy children.



Hammond held their annual food drive for the St. Joseph Soup Kitchen across the street from the Hammond Courthouse. They collected over 4 huge boxes of nonperishable foods and several monetary donations for the Soup Kitchen.